

heretics thenceforth carried on their work with greater privacy. Like the more serious persecutions of the next century, Courtenay's action had the effect of driving Lollardry underground, and thereby gave it the reputation, and to some degree the real character, of a conspiracy. Left to themselves the Leicestershire Lollards would have had no dealings with revolutionary politicians. As long as their proceedings were allowed to go on in the light of day, they had shown no such inclination.¹

Before the Archbishop's visitation of Leicester, Lollardry had spread thence to Nottingham lying twenty miles to the North.² Towards the close of his reign, Richard the Second, indefatigable in the pursuit of heresy, had four tradesmen of Nottingham brought up to London and examined in the King's Court of Chancery, in the presence of the Archbishop of York, to whose diocese their town belonged. Each of them was forced to repeat an oath renouncing the 'teaching of the Lollards.'³ 'I, William Dynot,' runs this remarkable document, 'before you, worshipful father and Archbishop of York and your clergy, . . . swear to God . . . that fro this day forth -ward I shall worship images, with praying and offering unto them in the worship of the Saints that they be made after, and also I shall no more despise pilgrimage.' This is a clear statement of one chief question at issue. To simple minds it may appear no other than this—whether to practise or not to practise idolatry.³ (*See map*, p. 352.)

Leicestershire and the neighbouring counties were not the only districts where the new doctrines spread during the reign of Richard the Second. The principal Wycliffites drifted one by one to the West of England, which seemed to hold out some special attraction. Perhaps when once Aston had gone there, Hereford, Purvey and Swynderby followed him merely

¹ WOMns, iii. 210-2; Courtenay's *Register** Lambeth Libr., f. 144 b.;

Knighton, ii. 212-3, 180-1.

² WilMns, iii. 204; Bo*. Pa*, 11 Bic. EL, pfc. 2, m, 20; *Rot. Claus.*, 12 B IL (236), m. 38.

a WilMns, iii. 225.